

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

The Office Action dated October 20, 2005 has been received and its contents carefully considered. In the Office Action, claim 17 was objected to because of an informality. Claims 14-15 and 17-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kaneko et al.* (U.S. 5,326,406) in view of *Satou et al.* (U.S. 5,961,850). Claim 16 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Reply, claims 14-17 and 21 have been amended; claim 22 has been added. Accordingly, claims 14-22 are pending in this application.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

As an initial matter, Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claim 16, which depends from independent claim 14, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicant has added new claim 22 which incorporates the indicated allowed features of claim 16 into independent form by also including the features of base claim 14. Accordingly, new claim 22 is believed to be allowable.

Interview

Applicant appreciates the courteous efforts of Examiner Tran to expedite prosecution of this application during the personal interview conducted on March 2, 2006. During the interview, Applicant proposed to make a number of claim amendments and provided a draft Amendment for discussion purposes only. In response, Examiner Tran concluded that the proposed amended claims were allowable over the cited prior art .

Claim Objections

Claim 17 was objected to because of an informality. Accordingly, claim 17 was been amended to replace the term "if" with -- is --. It is believed that claim 17 is in compliance with the statute.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 14-15 and 17-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being as being unpatentable over *Kaneko et al.* (U.S. 5,326,406) in view of *Satou et al.* (U.S. 5,961,850). Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, independent claims 14 and 21 have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that neither *Kaneko et al.* nor *Satou et al.* taken alone or in any proper combination discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. For example, neither of these cited references describes or suggests, *inter alia*, a method for surface treatment comprising supplying cleaning gas to an object to be process while cooling the object so as to "keep the cleaning gas

inactive... stopping supply of the cleaning gas” as recited in claim 14 and similarly in claim 21.

Kaneko et al. discloses a method of cleaning a semiconductor surface. For example, in the first and third embodiment of *Kaneko et al.*, ultraviolet rays are projected on the semiconductor surface within the cleaning gas mixture while supplying the cleaning gas mixture continuously to the semiconductor. In the second embodiment of *Kaneko et al.*, the semiconductor is heated within the cleaning gas mixture while supplying the cleaning gas mixture continuously to the semiconductor. However, *Kaneko et al.* does not teach or suggest cooling the object to keep the cleaning gas inactive in order to make the cleaning gas adhere to the surface of the object as recited in claims 14 and 21. Similarly, *Satou et al.*, does not cure the deficiencies of *Kaneko et al.*, because it also lacks the claimed features.

In accordance with the M.P.E.P. § 2143.03, to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 409 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). “All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art.” *In re Wilson*, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385, 165 USPQ 196 (CCPA 1970). Therefore, since the prior art fails to disclose or suggest all the claimed features, *Kaneko et al.*, alone or in combination with *Satou et al.*, cannot be said to teach or suggest the invention as recited in claims 14 and 21.

Claims 15-20 depend from independent claim 14 and are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 14.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the application are believed in order and such action is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite issuance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at (571) 203-2735.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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